

May 7, 2023

To: Greg Christiana
Town Moderator, Arlington MA
gchristiana@town.arlington.ma.us

Dear Mr. Christiana,

We are writing to you to include the following information in the warrant Article #44, the appropriation for Minuteman High School, for the discussion at the Town Meeting taking place this Monday, 5/8, when Superintendent Dawson is slated to present the budget.

Due to recent events and revelations, we are very concerned about Dr. Dawson's ability to effectively lead Minuteman School.

- On Friday, April 14, after students and staff had left the building for April break, Principal Clement was informed by Dr. Dawson that she would not be renewing his contract, which expires this June. Principal Clement has been at Minuteman school since 2009.
- Students and staff became aware of this development upon return from break and the response was shock, confusion and sadness.
- A "Save Mr. Clement" petition on Change.org was started by students on Wednesday, April 26 and had 1,000 signatures within 24 hours. Students, alumni, parents and teachers have signed, reaching a total of **1,317** signatures as of 5/6 at 5 pm.
- On Monday, May 1, the Minuteman Faculty Association Union took a vote of No Confidence in Superintendent Dawson which was unanimous.
- We learned that 4 senior administrators have resigned since Dr. Dawson started:
 - Erin Norsen—Facilities and Business Coordinator
 - Dan O'Brien—Communications Director
 - Rich Ikonen—Assistant Superintendent Director of Operations and Facilities
 - Victor Woodruff- IT Director, effective June 30
- As of 5/6, there has been NO communication from Superintendent Dawson to the staff, students or parents about this situation. This has created an atmosphere of confusion, both in the school and the parent community.

In addition, the Minuteman community will be sharing these concerns with the Minuteman School Committee at their next meeting on May 16. However, there is substantial concern that the School Committee members, including Arlington representative Michael Ruderman, have decided to continue their unwavering support of Dr. Dawson (whom they chose to hire a year ago), regardless of the feedback from teachers, administrators, students and parents.

As our town sends a significant proportion of our students to Minuteman, and as our town represents the largest number of students at Minuteman, we want to bring this issue to the attention of the Arlington Town Meeting Members and request your support.

Submitted by Mona Mandal, TMM Precinct 9

The following questions arise for Dr. Dawson in response her budget presentation in the midst of the situation described:

- How will your budget be affected if parents pull their students out of Minuteman in numbers because of the current atmosphere of uncertainty and unrest?
- Does your budget include expenses for hiring a new Principal since you decided not to renew Principal Clement's contract?
- Does your budget include expenses for replacing the personnel who have all resigned in the recent weeks/months?
- How will your projected facilities income be affected by the recent resignations of both the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and the Facilities and Business Coordinator?
- Are there any pending lawsuits or liabilities that the school is facing?

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Claudia Donnet
Arlington resident, Precinct 9

Courtney Hadly Zwirn
Arlington resident, Precinct 15

Dana Michelsen
Arlington resident, Precinct 16

Ellen Lawton
Arlington resident, Precinct 20

Gina Carme
Arlington resident, TMM Precinct 16

Nili Pearlmuter
Arlington resident, Precinct 7

Sarah Montague
Arlington Resident, Precinct 15

Todd Bearson
Arlington resident, Precinct 7